

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-13 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 NSCE-00

SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 SAM-01 SAB-01 OMB-01 SSM-03

ACDA-07 OPR-02 A-01 OC-06 CCO-00 SCS-03 SCA-01 SCCT-01

DHA-02 AID-05 PER-01 SY-05 /104 W
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FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1218

INFO SITREP COLLECTIVE PRIORITY 20

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 6411

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MILI, PINS, PINT, LE

SUBJECT: LEBANESE SITUATION JULY 19: NO SIGNS OF PROGRESS IN SYRIAN-
PALESTINIAN RELATIONS S SYRIAN MILITARY MOVES SUGGEST
OFFENSIVE PLANS

REF: BEIRUT 6374

1. SUMMARY: JALLOUD, ARAB LEAGUE NEGOTIATORS, AND LEBANESE
"ISLAMIC GROUP" ALL IN DAMASCUS SEEKING TO FIND SYRIAN-
PALESTINIAN AGREEMENT. NO SIGNS OF PROGRESS, AND TALK OF
SYRIAN"PALESTINIAN SUMMIT HAS CEASED FOR NOW. KFOUR
REPRESENTATIVES IN DAMASCUS AS WELL, POSSIBLY COORDINATING
NEXT MILITARY MOVES. JUNBLATT RE-DEFINES HIS POSITION
VIS-A-VIS SYRIAN-PALESTINIAN RAPPROCHEMENT. SYRIANS HAVE
STRENGTHENED FORCES AROUND SOFAR AND MAY ADVANCE BETWEEN
CHOUF AND METN AREAS. TELL ZAATAR BATTLE MORE VIOLENT,
BUT STILL INDECISIVE. SYRIAN AND CHRISTIAN ARTILLERY
SHELLS TRIPOLI. SYRIANS MAY BE IN POSITIONS WEST OF
JEZZINE IN SOUTH. US-ORGANIZED ROAD
CONVOY TO DAMASCUS ET FOR JULY 20, WITH SOME 390
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PERSONS EXPECTED. END SUMMARY.

2. ALL EYES ON DAMASCUS AS PRESIDENT ASSAD AND PLO REMAIN APPARENTLY INTRANSIGENT IN THEIR RESPECTIVE DEMANDS. LEFTIST PRESS BELIEVES SYRIA HAS OPTED FOR MILITARY SOLUTION. THOSE STILL ATTEMPTING MEDIATE SYRIAN-PALESTINIAN RAPPROCHEMENT INCLUDE LIBYAN PREMIER JALLOUD, ARAB LEAGUE NEGOTIATORS, AND LEBANESE "ISLAMIC GROUP." L'ORIENT LE JOUR SPECULATES THAT THEY WILL ALL ABANDON EFFORTS SHORTLY IN ABSENCE OF PROGRESS. JALLOUD WENT FROM BEIRUT TO DAMASCUS JULY 17, AND MET SYRIAN PREMIER AYOUBI JULY 18. ARAB LEAGUE DEPUTY KHOLI WENT FROM CAIRO TO DAMASCUS JULY 18. ONE REPORT HAS IT THAT KHOLI IS AWAITING OUTCOME OF SAUDI-EGYPTIAN-SUANDESE SUMMIT MEETING IN JIDDA BEFORE PROCEEDING TO BEIRUT AND THAT EGYPT MAY BE PERSUADED TO JOIN AL PEACEKEEPING FORCE WITH SYRIAN AGREEMENT. ISLAMIC GROUP IN DAMASCUS (ABDALLAH YAFI, TAKIEDDINE SOLH, MALEK SALAM, AND DR. NASSIB BARBIR) REORTEDLY IS DEMANDING COMPLETE SYRIAN WITHDRAWAL FROM LEBANON AS ESSENTIAL PREREQUISITE TO SYRIAN-PALESTINIAN RAPPROCHEMENT.

3. KDOUR FRONT DELEGATION IS STILL IN DAMASCUS, WORKING AGAINST SYRIAN CONCESSIONS TO PALESTINIANS AND PRESUMABLY ATTEMPTING TO COORDINATE SYRIAN AND CHRISTIAN MILITARY PLANS. KFOUR FRONT MAY NOT BE INTERNALLY COMPLETELY UNITED: PHALANGE POLITICAL BUREAU MEMBER IBRAHIM NAJJAR ALLUDES TO "SECESSIONIST" TENDENCIES SITUATED TO "THE RIGHT AND LEFT OF THE PHALANGE." PHALANGE POLITICAL BUREAU HAS JOINED Wafa (SITREP JULY 18) IN DISAVOWING ANY CHRISTIAN PLAN TO ATTACK WEST BEIRUT. NOON 19 JULY RIGHTIST RADIO REPORT BROADCAST MESSAGE FROM FRANJIEH TO JIDDA SUMMIT LEADERS COMPLAINING OF LIBYAN ROLE, STATING CONFLICT IS BETWEEN LEBANESE AND PALESTINIANS, AND, MOST IMPORTANT, STATING HEE NOT SEEKING CONCESSIONS BUT ONLY STRICT ADHERENCE TO CAIRO ACCORDS BY PALESTINIANS.

4. ON LEBANESE LEFT, JUNBLATT SAYS PUBLICLY HE NOT CONFIDENTIAL

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OPPOSED TO SYRIAN-PALESTINIAN RAPPROCHEMENT PROVIDED SYRIANS WITHDRAW FROM SOFAR. PRIVATELY, HE IS REPORTED AS SAYING HE WILL TURN AGAINST PALESTINIANS IF THEY DEPOSE YASSIR ARAFAT TO ACCOMMODATE SYRIAN DEMANDS. HE SAYS IMMEDIATE SYRIAN POLITICAL OBJECTIVE IS TO SPLIT LEFTIST-PALESTINIAN ALLIANCE.

5. ON GROUND, SYRIANS ARE STRENGTHENING FORCES AT

SOFAR AND IN AREA BETWEEN THE CHOUF AND METN, PERHAPS AS FIRST STEP IN COORDINATED SYRIAN-CHRISTIAN PLAN TO DRIVE PALESTINIANS FROM AREAS EAST OF BEIRUT. INTENSIVE SHELLING AT ALEY.

6. BATTLE DRAGS ON AT TELL ZAATAR. LEFTISTS CLAIM HAVE REPULSED THREE RIGHTIST ATTACKS DURING DAYLIGHT JULY 18 AND ONE DURING NIGHT OF JULY 18-19. RIGHTISTS CLAIM HAVE OVERRUN PLO HEADQUARTERS IN CAMP AND TAKEN 200 ARMED PRISONERS JULY 18, BUT ADMIT STILL AT LEAST 400 PALESTINIAN FIGHTERS IN CAMP. HEAVY ARTILLERY DUELS JULY 18 IN SURROUNDING AREAS AND CLASHES ALONG CITY CONFRONTATION LINE. ARMENIANS DENY LEFTIST CHARGES THEY HELPING CHRISTIANS IN NABAA AREA AND REASSERT NEUTRALITY.

7. IN NORTH, SYRIANS AND RIGHTISTS REPORTED SHELLING TRIPOLI. IN SOUTH, ONE REPORT SAYS SYRIAN ELEMENTS LOCATED AT SALHIEH, ON ROAD BETWEEN JEZZINE AND SIDON.

8. DESPITE DENIALS FROM RIGHT AND LEFT, RUMORS PERSIST

IN WEST BEIRUT OF SYRIAN/CHRISTIAN PLAN TO INVADE CITY. US EMBASSY HAS ANNOUNCED THAT INTERNATIONAL DEPARTURE FROM WEST BEIRUT WILL BE BY ROAD CONVOY TO DAMASCUS, LEAVING EARLY JULY 20. SOME 390 PASSENGERS EXPECTED.
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